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**ALPHONSO SUMMER LITERACY CAMP**

**PILOT PROGRAM PROPOSAL**

Alphonso Scholarship Fund, Inc. (ASF)

A registered Florida nonprofit 501(c)(3) charitable educational organization (EIN: 85-2482731)

*Bridging the achievement gap for children in rural communities of Jamaica.*

Website - AlphonsoScholarshipFund.org

Email - Info@AlphonsoScholarshipFund.org

Address - 7901 4th St N, STE 4000 St. Petersburg, FL 33702

Phone Number - (305)763-1647

Amoya Rowe, Founder & Executive Director

United Way Worldwide
701 N. Fairfax Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Warm greetings and salutations,

Alphonso Scholarship Fund, Inc. (*ASF*) is requesting a grant award in the amount of $10,715.00 to support the implementation of the Alphonso Summer Literacy Camp pilot program. ASF is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) charitable educational organization whose mission is to bridge the achievement gap for children in rural communities of Jamaica. This initiative will provide reading and socioemotional programming to fifth-grade students to increase youth socioemotional and literacy skills.

ASF believes that access to equitable education is the best form of primary prevention. Thus, the organization has developed Alphonso Summer Literacy Camp to reinforce community engagement and efficacy so to achieve social capital. ASF Board of Directors are successful professionals in the fields of child welfare, social and public services, and education. ASF programs and key performance indicators have been extensively developed and are routinely reviewed by experts in their field including a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, Clinical Assistant Professor, Outreach Coordinator, and a Clinical Social Worker. With an investment from United Way Worldwide, Alphonso Summer Literacy Camp will support children from rural communities in leading holistically healthy lives using refined prosocial and literacy skills.

Included is a formal grant proposal which is comprised of an agency introduction, problem statement, project goal and objectives, methods and implementation, and budget. These items provide a descriptive layout of the Alphonso Summer Literacy Camp pilot program.

On behalf of Alphonso Scholarship Fund, Inc., community partners, and other stakeholders, we value your ongoing commitment to local communities and thank you in anticipation of your support.

Please, consider Alphonso Summer Literacy camp as a worthy entity to further the mission of United Way Worldwide.

With gratitude,

Amoya Rowe, BSc, CWDP

Founder & Executive Director

**Executive Summary**

Alphonso Scholarship Fund, Inc. (*ASF*) is requesting a grant award in the amount of $10,715.00 to support the implementation of the Alphonso Summer Literacy Camp pilot program. ASF is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to *bridge the achievement gap for children in rural communities of Jamaica*. Since its incorporation in 2020, ASF has centered its programs to serve the most vulnerable populations of Jamaica. As people groups across the world posture themselves to cope with the infamous effects of COVID-19, social unrest, and unprecedented acts of terror, it is likewise time for society to become equally zealous in its feat of addressing prominent social discrepancies whose impacts are amplified among rural communities in developing countries (Gill & Schellekens, 2021).

A singular answer to mitigating the inequities of society does not exist. Still, there is a distinguished revelation that access to quality education can satisfy multiple levels in the hierarchy of needs. ASF believes that education is the best form of primary prevention. Thus, the organization is prepared to provide reading and socioemotional programming to fifth-grade students over the span of eight weeks to increase youth socioemotional and literacy skills. Studies have shown that children who have access to interventive programs such as Alphonso Summer Literacy Camp avoid juvenile delinquency, increase brain development, and improve protective factors that lead to holistically healthy lives (Funk, 2018).

 ASF has invested hundreds of hours with experts in education, social service, and mental health fields to develop curricula and program activities that are evidenced-based, effective, and efficient. Providing fiscal support will allow ASF to meet the goals and objectives of Alphonso Summer Literacy camp. More importantly, it will radically impact the trajectory of children living in rural communities of Jamaica positively; a long-term result that is priceless.

**Agency Introduction**

Alphonso Scholarship Fund, Inc. (*ASF*) is an emerging Florida Nonprofit 501(c)3 corporation that facilitates summer reading and socioemotional programming to fifth grade students in rural Jamaica with the goal of increasing youth socioemotional and literacy skills. Founded in 2018 and later incorporated in 2020, ASF works to fulfill its mission to “*bridge the achievement gap for children in rural communities of Jamaica*”. The day-to-day operations of ASF are primarily funded through individual giving and by the contributions of its founding board of directors made up of volunteers with successful experience in child welfare, social services, and education. The work of the organization is further strengthened by an international team of both sporadic and permanent interns and professional volunteers.

In designing its programs, Alphonso Scholarship Fund, Inc. followed the framework of primary prevention principles from the Community Health field. Thus, key pursuits of ASF include an emphasis on community engagement and education. The main activity of ASF is the Alphonso Summer Literacy Camp which comprises of a scholarship incentive for enrolled children and outreach initiatives to support the community at large.

The Alphonso Summer Literacy Camp is a pilot program that will be an eight-week intensive and enrichment reading curriculum featuring social-emotional learning (SEL) components for children. Differentiated instruction will be used to meet individualized SMART goals developed for each child upon initial assessments. Enrolled youths will be provided with meals throughout the camp and all scholastic materials will be given to ensure that there is no cost to families. Scholarships will be awarded to children previously enrolled in the ASF Summer Literacy Camp to support their transition into secondary school- as the associated cost of further education is a common impediment for low-income families (Smith & Ashiabi, 2007). ASF also partners with organizations to facilitate community initiatives, such as back to school drives and field days, which encourages community engagement and provides opportunities for students, families, and community members to work together.

Infamous with the characteristics of a developing country, children in Jamaica from rural households that are at or below the poverty line exhibit a heightened predisposition to experiencing complex privations (Smith & Ashiabi, 2007). This narrative is frequently multigenerational and has a linear correlation to inequitable access to education and delays in the development of prosocial skills (Das, Do, Friedman, McKenzie, & Scott, 2007). ASF was founded with an awareness of these challenges, noting the potential for primary preventative measures such as community engagement and education, to mitigate such paradigms (Community Watch Paper, 2022). ASF is powered by the core belief that education is the best form of primary prevention. Caribbean Education Foundation, Inc. has found that 40-50% of students (approximately 300,000 children) are performing below their grade levels. Considering this, Alphonso Scholarship Fund, Inc. has a goal of expanding its reach across the land of wood and water.

**Problem Statement**

Thousands of children living in Jamaica are disposed to a reduced quality of life and poverty. There is a wide array of combinations in systemic and unique components that lends to this reality. Even so, there are a few common factors which perpetuate this narrative: inadequate familial economic viability, poor community engagement and efficacy, and limited access to educational support. To begin unpacking the scope of this community issue, we must observe the pattern of how this cycle operates. Systemically, the following graphic shows the intricacy of how the allocation of international aid can disproportionately affects rural communities.

**LOCAL**



**SOCIETAL**

**SYSTEMIC**

Concerning societal challenges, Jamaica is classified as the leading country in the western hemisphere and the tenth highest in the world for homicides (U.S. Agency for International Development, 2022). In 2022, the U.S. Department of State rallied behind Jamaica’s Prime Minister to declare a state of emergency and strict travel ban for some parishes because of the rapidly increasing rates of violent crime (Miller, 2022). In the year before that, USAID paid more than one million dollars to provide for community violence prevention programs (U.S. Department of State, 2021). As rural communities compose nearly half of Jamaica’s population and are the central sites for violent crimes, inadequate aid to social service and educational systems leads to increased delinquency as a foreseeable response for failing to meet basic needs.

On the local level, the evident community issue is the lack of holistic programs that provide preventative activities to vulnerable people groups, i.e., children from rural communities. Stringent funding dilutes the potency of community programs and the quality of education that a child receives is dependent on factors outside of their immediate control. Nonetheless, only one of the aforementioned factors has the potential of influencing the trajectory of the others and that is equitable access to quality education. Studies have proven the success of intervention programs and specifically summer programs that offer prosocial activities for youths who need to stay within the framework of structure and predictability they are afforded during the academic year.

Essentially, because of steadily rising crime rates, funding sources into Jamaica has an affinity to be used for crime prevention programs. This bias creates financial strains on local social service entities and the education system. Children enrolled in rural schools are infamously behind when compared to their counterparts living in more affluent communities that can afford to keep up with modern educational supports. A shift to preventative initiatives needs to occur so more children in rural communities of Jamaica are not falling in between the achievement gap. In addition to core curriculums of math, science, and social studies, literacy is a fundamental skill and trustworthy indicator of prospective health, wealth, and quality of life. Your support is the catalyst necessary to fuel the zeal of Alphonso Scholarship Fund, Inc. If you want to help bridge the gap, we ask that you consider investing in the Alphonso Summer Literacy Camp.

**Project Goal**

By the fourth quarter of the Alphonso Summer Literacy Camp project, at least 80% or more of enrolled students will maintain or increase their socioemotional and literacy skills as determined by pre- and post-assessments.

***Process Objective***

By the end of the first quarter of the Alphonso Summer Literacy Camp project, camp counselors will complete baseline assessments and develop coinciding care plans for all enrolled students.

*Evaluation*

ASF will rely on the findings from both quantitative and qualitative data to measure the short-term and long-term impacts of its key programs. The Self-efficacy assessment is a tool commonly used to measure individuals' perception of themselves and their general confidence in their ability to complete tasks or a certain behavior. The Dolch Sight Word Assessment uses high-frequency vocabulary words in increasing reading levels to teach children how to read. Practicing how to quickly recognize and correctly pronounce the words on the assessment has been proven to increase fluency in a child's literacy skills.

The results from these assessments in conjunction with general observations will be used to develop care plans for each child enrolled in the project. Care plan goals for all children will include a goal to maintain current high scores or increase low scores. However, the specific action steps and support systems for each child will be individualized to the child's input, observed learning style, and parent input.

A fully enrolled program will comprise thirty students separated into three groups of ten. Each group of ten students will have a lead camp counselor and one or more volunteers to assist as needed. Assessments will be completed for each student over the first two weeks of the beginning of camp. This will provide sufficient time for counselors to assess their cohort of students, gather input, and observe the attendance, behavior, and course performance of each child. ASF will signal completion of this objective by the number of children that at the end of the first two weeks of camp have a student file that contains their baseline test assessments and completed care plan with any relevant notes from observations noted.

***Project Objective***

By the end of the fourth quarter of the Alphonso Summer Literacy Camp project, at least 80% or more of enrolled students will complete one or more individual action steps to increase self-efficacy scores as determined by the care plan.

*Evaluation*

The department of juvenile justice and the national family support network identify several protective factors deemed as key performance indicators for sufficient self-efficacy. Moreover, the pillars of these organizations reflect a linear relationship in the presence of protective factors and the ability of a child and his or her family to lead holistically healthy lives. The socio-emotional curriculum covered throughout the Alphonso Summer Literacy Camp project will be scaffolded on protective factors.

This objective adds a necessary emphasis on building the self-efficacy of enrolled children. Counselors will determine which best practice tool is most appropriate for a child and encourage them to engage with it proactively. For example, Jane Doe may have an action step of writing a list of five positive things she loves about herself because the counselor noticed she struggles with low self-esteem. Meanwhile, John Doe may have an action step of speaking to a new friend during lunch because the counselor noticed he struggles with building peer relationships.

While all children will have a general goal of increasing self-efficacy, the action steps to doing so will be unique to the dynamics of the given child. Counselors will be responsible, with the assistance of camp volunteers, for orchestrating opportunities and coaching children into practicing newly learned skills. Nonetheless, at the time a child's care plan is completed, the child and parent should have been allowed to review it and receive a copy. This will also encourage parents to take an active role in reinforcing protective factors. ASF will signal that this objective is met by the number of students that have completed one or more of the action steps developed by the camp counselor with biweekly progress notes and the accurate date and times are documented on the child's care plan confirming the progression of action steps.

**Methodology**

Alphonso Scholarship Fund, Inc. (*ASF*) is prepared to strategically pursue project goals immediately upon receiving funding. The below chart shows the timeline of key activities over the span of the Alphonso Summer Literacy Camp project anticipated to begin in January 2024 and end in September 2024.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| AnticipatedFundingAllocation | Month | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 0% | Onboard Staff and Volunteers | **X** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5% | Training |  | **X** |  |  | **X** | **X** | **X** |  |  |
| 0% | Student referrals |  |  |  | **X** |  |  |  |  |  |
| 20% | Purchase program Materials |  |  |  |  | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| 5% | Program Orientation |  |  |  |  | **X** | **X** |  |  |  |
| 0% | Pre-assessments |  |  |  |  |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| 70% | Student Instruction |  |  |  |  |  | **X** | **X** | **X** |  |
| 0% | Post-assessments |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | **X** |  |
| 0% | Evaluation |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | **X** |

**Project Narrative**

***Onboard Staff and Volunteers***

 ASF will partner with Cassava River Primary and Infant school located in St. Catherine, Jamaica to host and facilitate the literacy camp project. Cassava River regularly has summer school as an opportunity for students to get caught up with their grades. Thus, it will not create a burden for the three current academic staff to volunteer as Camp Counselors for the summer or for use of the facilities during the project. Cassava River administration will provide the three academic staff with the same compensation they would have earned if they were volunteering for regular summer school. ASF will also partner with the University of the West Indies to recruit student volunteers who will be assigned to Camp Counselors. These college students will earn hands-on experience in a classroom setting and will also earn service-learning hours toward their college degree.

The screening method for onboarding volunteers will be the same in-house methods used by Cassava River. This will make sure that ASF is meeting any background check or security precautions put in place by the Jamaica ministry of education without the burden of recruiting and screening external personnel. Volunteers will report to their assigned Counselor and Counselors will report to the principal of Cassava River. ASF board of directors will regularly communicate with the principal and all entities for proper supervision.

***Training***

Once Camp Counselors and all volunteers are onboarded, there will be mandated training so everyone involved is well informed on the objectives of ASF Summer Literacy Camp as well as their responsibilities concerning their roles. Training will be broken down into Academic Instruction, Social-emotional learning, and Mental Health training. Academic Instruction will introduce everyone to the exact curricula and assessments to be used during the camp. At this time, counselors and volunteers will have an opportunity to tailor the curricula to their teaching style in a group planning session. Social-emotional learning will focus on building care plans for enrolled students. Everyone will have an opportunity to discuss and share best practices.

Finally, mental health training will ensure all individuals have the necessary tools to create a safe learning environment for the students and know how to respond proactively in case of a mental health emergency. Training will be conducted in three one-week sessions and will be reinforced by partnerships with licensed professionals relevant to the training of the week. For example, a licensed social worker and Chief Executive Officer of a Workplace Mental Health and Wellness Consulting Company along with a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and Licensed Mental Health Counselor will facilitate the training on mental health. Everyone will be provided with training materials to reference as tangible resources throughout the project.

**Student Referrals**

 After training, Camp Counselors will begin to process referrals for fifth-grade students to be enrolled in the summer literacy camp. Referrals will come from observations of students performing below satisfactory in attendance, behavior, and course performance and who have scored at or below satisfactory on the grade 4 Primary Exit Profile (PEP) exam. Camp counselors will be highly involved in referring students since they are also teachers that interact with the students regularly in the school year, and often across different grade levels. A list of thirty students will be finalized to engage in the project. Once students and their families confirm their intent to participate in the program, these students and their families will be notified of the project orientation date and be randomly divided into groups of ten.

**Purchase Program Materials**

After a list of thirty students is finalized, ASF will begin purchasing program materials. This includes all of the academic supplies that will be provided to students at no cost, i.e., notebooks, paper, and writing utensils. This also includes textbooks and activity books that camp counselors will use to enhance their instruction and ensure students are engaged using various mediums. ASF has partnered with the Tallahassee Fire Department to host a school supplies drive which will begin August 2023 to alleviate some costs. ASF will also continue to use the tactics identified in its major giving and annual fund campaign to secure donations and in-kind contributions.

**Program Orientation**

 The program orientation will occur in two parts. The first orientation will occur in May for staff, partners, and volunteers only. The second orientation will follow the layout of a traditional orientation and will be for enrolled students, their parents, counselors, and volunteers. In both of these spaces, the goal is the same, to build team morale and community support. ASF will use this opportunity for meeting organizational marketing goals as well. Therefore, attendees will be provided with informational and swag items and be encouraged to share experiences during the ASF literacy camp across different social media platforms. This will help to spread awareness of ASF and potentially attract more funders and community partners.

**Pre-assessments, Student Instruction, and Post-assessments**

 These three components make up the main programming of the project. During this time, students are fully engaged in instruction and working towards meeting their care plan goals. This is also when students will have opportunities to participate in community events like community gardening, neighborhood restoration, and other activities to foster community engagement. Specific activities and the number of opportunities students have to participate in them will be dependent on the funding capacity of ASF. Scholarships will also be provided to support children transitioning to secondary school or its equivalent once they graduate. Thus, this is the area where the majority of funds will be allocated to support the success of the project.

**Evaluation**

 At the end of camp, the success of the project will be measured by comparing the results between pre and post-tests. Qualitative information will also be collected from students, parents, volunteers, counselors, partners, and administrators for a full understanding of project highlights and growth areas. In the future to come, ASF will pursue longitudinal studies to measure the impacts of Alphonso Summer Literacy Camp as a preventative program for juvenile delinquency and dropout. Collecting and analyzing these findings now will create the foundation of this long-term goal and perhaps provide a scaffold for similar programs to come.

**Future Funding**

Alphonso Scholarship Fund, Inc. has a comprehensive fundraising plan that lists specific activities to support the longevity of this project. As an emerging nonprofit, ASF has the benefit of having a large pool of new supporters to develop meaningful relationships. This is reflected in the outreach plan that is included as a pivotal component of the major gift and annual fund campaigns in the fundraising plan. ASF has been reliant on a thorough program theory to signal virtue. Yet still, the ASF board of directors has formed mutually beneficial partnerships with various stakeholders who are eager to support its key programs.

The Tallahassee Fire Department is partnering to host a supplies drive, the University of Florida refers students to the ASF internship and voluntarism program, and Cassava River Primary and Infant School have committed the use of its facility to host the pilot project. All these accomplishments have been possible without adequate funding. It is beyond imaginable what would be possible if funding was awarded. Additionally, ASF recently received authorization from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Department of Business & Professional Regulation, Alachua County, and the City of Gainesville to launch a new fundraising initiative, Donate for a Plate! The ASF team will offer prepackaged and prepared Jamaican food items during tailgate events, farmers' markets, and other local programs so to raise money for the Summer Literacy Camps.

ASF will continue to use fundraising tools such as social media gifting, electronic direct mail asks individual giving, and crowdsourcing platforms. These tools will help ASF to cultivate a sustainable donor pool.

**Program Budget Narrative**

Alphonso Summer Literacy Camp pilot program will be the sole beneficiary of awarded funds to provide summer reading and socioemotional programming to fifth-grade students in rural Jamaica. Adequate funding, as described in the attached program budget, will allow Alphonso Scholarship Fund, Inc. to meet its goal of increasing youth socioemotional and literacy skills. Justification of each line item is provided below. The total budget to facilitate the Alphonso Summer Literacy Camp pilot program is $10,715.00.

**Training**

ASF, Inc. will provide manuals to Camp Counselors, Volunteers, and all relevant parties that will play an active role in program delivery. Manuals will serve as tangible references for best practices across all program activities. They will also pronounce necessary policies and procedures for compliance purposes as well as ensure ethical and programmatic key performance indicators are met. The invoice for the printing costs for manuals with Renaissance Printing company located in Gainesville, Fl is $270.00. ASF also plans to provide light refreshments given the lengthy duration needed to provide thorough training. The ASF team will also incorporate incentives such as raffles to build buy-in and team comrades. The estimated cost of these items is $360.00.

**Program Materials**

Alphonso Summer Literacy Camp will be provided to enrolled students for free. Therefore, ASF will provide all notebooks and writing utensils needed for students to actively engage in the program. Office supplies such as filing equipment, folders, and other data management tools will be provided to Counselors and Volunteers, so they are equipped to track the progress of students in a manner that is easily accessible and accurate. Due to deficiencies in technical infrastructure, and common to schools in rural communities, ASF will need to purchase internet passes and electronic devices for use during the program. ASF will also be using International Freight Consolidators to ship purchased and donated program materials to Jamaica.

Miscellaneous materials might be needed throughout the program to encourage the efficacy of service delivery. Some anticipated materials might be computer privacy screens for students with visual impairments, headphones for students that might benefit from educational videos, or tactile stimulants for students that benefit from fidget toys. This line will be used to provide support for unpredictable program accommodations. The estimated cost for these line items is $1,500.00. Additionally, the cost to provide nutritious meals for all students each day of the program is $1,945.00.

**Orientation**

Orientation will be the primary space for ASF to incorporate outreach efforts to expand its reach to community partners, donors, and families. ASF will make infographics and printed materials available for attending persons. ASF will intentionally facilitate activities during the orientations to foster a sense of community. Other general and admin costs are included in the budget to cover any unanticipated materials to facilitate a successful orientation, i,e., the printing of sign-in sheets, developing event fliers, and processing impromptu donations. The estimated total to cover these line items is $300.00.

**Academic Instruction & Social-emotional Instruction**

ASF will provide current classroom materials to support Camp Counselors and Volunteers in providing satisfactory instruction for students using best practices in education. Supplemental materials will also be provided so Camp Counselors can adapt instruction to the unique care plan goals of each student as needed. Some supplemental supplies include counters to help students count syllables, dry-erase boards for students who learn best from doing, or index cards for students who learn best from repetition. Some activities in the socioemotional curriculum might require transportation. For example, students might benefit from a field trip to the Bob Marley Museum to discuss culture and historic events. This would be a creative way of addressing the belonging protective factor. As the emotional well-being and needs of a student are unique to their experiences, the 'other' line is necessary in case of extraneous needs to make sure each student has what they need to feel safe in the learning environment. The estimated cost for these line items is $2,400.00.

**Community Engagement**

Community engagement describes opportunities for ASF and its stakeholders to be involved with the community. This may include speaking engagements, community events, and other mediums to increase community awareness of ASF and its programs. Staff and Volunteers may need to pay professional fees to produce quality communication care efforts, i.e., photos, videos, audio recordings, etc. An estimate quote of $250.00 was provided to ASF for this service throughout the entire duration of the program.

**Scholarships**

ASF has intentions to award students that complete Alphonso Summer Literacy Camp with scholarships to cover the cost of tuition and or registration fees for secondary school. Providing that all thirty students complete the program, the estimated cost for scholarships is $2,700.00.

**Other Expenses**

ASF prioritizes the safety and well-being of all stakeholders involved with Alphonso Summer Literacy Camp. This line will help to create an environment that promotes safety and security. This may include purchasing first aid kits for all classrooms and mental health first aid training. The estimated costs for this line item are $690.00.

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